

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

March 15, 1999

LB 99

It really has no cure. So the purpose, the real purpose of LB 99 is to provide a method by which we can ensure that all of our people who are diagnosed with diabetes have access to the kind of healthcare they need to manage this disease. I just got a letter in my office from...I don't remember who it's...whose constituent it was now, but it was a handwritten letter from an older lady somewhere in Nebraska who talked about the fact that she often makes the decision between the food on her table and the testing equipment and so forth necessary to keep her glucose levels under control. She is not alone. We have excellent studies from all across the United States that say that you could actually control the costs of diabetes if you can control, through testing and education, those end-stage results of diabetes, and I think Senator Suttle is going to talk about some of those end-stage results that are so very, very expensive and that the more we can work to prevent some of those occurrences the less our costs will be. So, with that, I am going to give the remainder of my time to Senator Suttle and, with that, thank you very much.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Senator Suttle, you have about three minutes.

SENATOR SUTTLE: Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Senator Schimek, for again introducing this legislation. I'd like to take this opportunity to explain what diabetes is, how it affects a person who has it, and some of the complications that occur because of this inherited, complicated disease. Let me begin with a definition of diabetes. It's a condition in which part or all of the ability of the body to utilize sugars has been lost. In normal people, sugar derived from the digestion and the absorption of food, is partly burned to supply energy for the body's ongoing needs. Any excess is converted into fat and stored. We all know about the excess being stored into fat. People with diabetes have no trouble digesting or absorbing sugar, but their ability to burn, convert and store it is impaired with the result that sugar builds up in the blood. If you recall your high school biology class, you know that insulin secreted by the islets of Langerhans in the pancreas is needed to break down the food ingested, it promotes the storage of fat in the liver, and it aids in the utilization of sugar by the tissues, and it influences the metabolism of fats and proteins. There's two types of diabetes: type I diabetes, better known as